

My name is Bill Stokes and I am a member of the Alliance for a Livable Pinellas which is a coalition of conservation groups representing 15,000 members. The present media industry in America is broken. You all have an opportunity to leave a legacy to your descendants of either reforming it or maintaining the status quo of espousing principles that are detrimental to a free press and thus democracy. This is a non-partisan issue that affects all Americans.

Localism is endangered when it comes to media coverage. There are many examples of the lack of critical information in covering the frequent hurricanes that are not uncommon in Florida. Oftentimes, TV is vulnerable and/or inoperable and not as capable of issuing up to the minute warnings as radio. When the spectrum is spanned on radio for local advisories, preprogrammed, canned homogenized national playlists are on the air devoid of essential local safety alerts.

All media presently is in a race to the bottom to dispense vulgarity, sensationalism, celebrity worship, blatant excessive consumerism, biased reporting slanted toward ownership's views, scant if any local reporting, narrowing the demographic to only the 18 to 34 year old, and a pathetic lack of any semblance of an open, diverse, intelligent,

community- responsive and competitive media environment. Is this the exchange you feel is fulfilling the obligation to broadcast in the public interest for the use of the public's airways? Yes, the airways are part of the public commons and they are being abused. This degradation must come to an end. If the FCC continues to relax the oversight on corporate media, it will result in a serious deterioration of the free press which is one of the most important components of democracy.

It has been said that the Internet can fill much of the present void of local community communication. There are still many segments of society that are not Internet active and need conventional media to be properly informed locally. Without an improved conventional media, communication will be impeded.

The upcoming digital changeover will require a fourfold increase in the airwave requirement. This is an additional reason, any more coverage by corporate media should be carefully scrutinized to avoid jeopardizing low power FM and TV stations which are invaluable in servicing communities with localized news and current affairs. This simply is not happening with commercial products.

Gentlemen, please make a positive contribution to all the people. Restore the potential for media to serve the best interest of the readers, listeners and viewers by encouraging, not discouraging a diverse discourse untainted by unfair advantage to only conglomerates.

Thank you.

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